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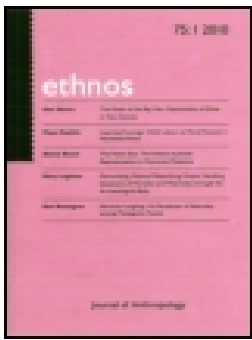
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# The Production of Urban Space by Violence and its Aftermath in Jakarta and Kota Ambon, Indonesia

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## ABSTRACT

Violence has an enormous potential impact on the production of urban space. This article presents an analysis of how violence has made an impact on Indonesian cities since 1998. Using case material from communal violence in Kota Ambon, and lynching and vigilantism in Jakarta, the article addresses the question what impact did violence have on the spatial restructuring of some Indonesian cities and, conversely, – assuming that the people who used violence are slowly relinquishing its use – what impact does the restoration of law and order have on urban space? How enduring are some of the underlying, historical patterns of violence and do many of them still exist, hidden under the surface, today?

**KEYWORDS** Violence; urban space; unlearning violence; communal violence; Indonesia; Kota Ambon

## Introduction

Ever since Henri Lefebvre (1974 [1986]) wrote his seminal work *La production de l'espace*, social scientists have considered urban space a social product, the outcome of numerous human interactions. People constitute urban space and, conversely, to a certain degree urban space structures the behaviour of urban residents. In Lefebvre's view, the main protagonists in the production of space fall into two groups: urban specialists (urban planners and real-estate developers) and ordinary citizens. Others, following this lead, have focused on different groups of actors, or on different kinds of spaces (for instance, public and private space, or symbolic space), specific locations, or certain activities, such as street trade (De Certeau 1984: xii–xxii, 91–110; Soja 1985; Rapoport 1994; Low 1996; Bender 2002; Weiner 2002).

One particular activity that certainly does have the potential to make an enormous impact on the production of urban space is the use of violence. Violence can result in no-go zones for specific people in specific neighbourhoods. Violence, or the threat of violence, might keep certain people off the street during specific times, for instance, women after dark. Violence, or the fear of it, is the motor behind the construction of gated communities (Low 2001). In extreme cases, violence has split 'wounded cities' into sections which cease interaction completely for some time, for instance, Berlin, Belfast and Beirut (Schneider & Susser 2003).

The aim of this article is to present an analysis of how violence has made an impact on Indonesian urban spaces since 1998. During the long, authoritarian rule of President

Soeharto (1966–1998), ordinary citizens who chose to stay out of trouble had learnt to count on Indonesian cities as safe places. Therefore, in May 1998 many citizens were shocked by the unanticipated rampages through Jakarta, Solo, Medan and Palembang, just one week before the president was forced to step down. Some innocent people were murdered, many Chinese women were raped and many shops were looted. More violence was to come. In some instances, bands of vigilantes were hired by politicians to intimidate demonstrators. It was not long before the custom of lynching petty criminals also rapidly spread and even appeared to have become entrenched as a regular pattern in some places. The worst violence was either inter-ethnic or inter-religious and in a few medium-sized cities in ‘Outer Indonesia’ in which this kind of violence took place, it totally reorganised urban space. In the span of a few years, the image of many Indonesian cities changed from being secure havens to violent, dangerous places and these new imaginaries have had considerable consequences for the structuring of urban space.

For the last decade or so, the urban violence has subsided, but we cannot expect that cities will simply revert to the old spatial order, which prevailed before the rise in the incidence of violence. Violence is a more pressing motivation for people to do something about their situation than is tranquillity, and therefore the damage caused by the instant responses to violence, such as the segregation of Christians and Muslims in Kota Ambon, might take a long time to undo. Even though people long for normality and peace seems to have been secured again, ‘the memory of such [horrible] events is folded into ongoing relationships’ (Das 2006: 8) and will continue to influence people’s use of urban space, deciding which places are still off-limits and what physical precautions are necessary.

The main question I would like to address in this article is what impact has violence had on the spatial restructuring of some Indonesian cities and, conversely, – assuming that the people who used violence are slowly relinquishing its use – what impact does the return to a more peaceful society have on urban space. In passing I shall also pay attention to the reverse of the question: whether urban space (or cities as a way of life) shapes violence or perhaps constitutes particular forms of violence. Particular places, such as bus terminals, thoroughfares, shopping areas and residential areas, elicit specific forms of violence, making it literally possible to map concentrations of violence (Tadié 2009).

Before I attempt to analyse the spatial consequences of violence, it is imperative to have some understanding of violence itself. The spate of violence surrounding the fall of Soeharto has produced an avalanche of works, both popular and scholarly, trying to explain it, the majority underlining the unfavourable conditions prevailing at the time. These destabilising conditions were the economic deprivation caused by the Asian Crisis, the competition between prospective successors to the ageing Soeharto, the rivalry between factions of the army and the generation of disorder as an excuse for the state to declare martial law in a last-ditch stand to save the collapsing regime (Siegel 1998; Aditjondro 2001; Sidel 2001; Kusno 2010: 102).

Certainly these contemporary factors did contribute but historical studies of the violence in Indonesia have revealed some underlying, more permanent causes and, if these ideas about historical continuity are correct, the ‘next major political transition in Indonesia could unleash the same violent competitive dynamics’ (see also Colombijn and Lindblad 2002; Schulte Nordholt 2002; Van Klinken 2007: 144). If some Indonesian actors have known how to use violence to further their cause in the past, why would they refrain from doing so again in the future if the situation calls for it?

The historical rootedness of patterns of violence is an important element in the second part of the main question – what impact does the return to a more peaceful society have on urban space –, because if historical patterns of violence still exist, or if urbanites believe such patterns lie dormant under the surface, the current peace will have only a limited impact on urban spaces. Once violence has become one of the accepted parts of the cultural repertoire for dealing with conflict, perpetrators of violence cannot simply conveniently put this knowledge out of their minds. Indonesian scholars are deeply concerned about this fact. The Indonesian criminologist Yohanes Sutoyo remarked in 2000: '[The Soeharto government] taught us that the only way to solve a problem is with violence. It is difficult to undo this' (Aditjondro 2001: 101; Sutoyo cited by Schulte Nordholt 2002: 51–52). Before he was murdered, the human rights activist Munir was quoted as saying, 'It is clear that violence is (seen) as the method that is most appropriate to solve problems in society' (Purdey 2005: 121). Finally, Samsu Rizal Panggabean has asserted that, 'The state and society in Indonesia need to learn new approaches to deal with conflict' (Panggabean 2006: 220). If I am correct in thinking that people cannot unlearn violence as easily as they learn to use it, the spatial consequences of past violence will remain visible for a long time to come.

I shall begin by elaborating on the most current, often contradictory, explanations of the violence in Indonesia. Thereafter, the remainder of the article is structured around the three forms of violence, which seem most relevant to the urban context: ethnic and religious cleansing, the lynching of petty criminals by spontaneously formed mobs and the role of thugs and vigilantes. These examples represent three of the four types of violence discerned by Gerry van Klinken (2007: 3), respectively: large-scale communal violence, social violence and localised communal violence, which all peaked after Soeharto resigned.<sup>1</sup>

I do not pretend to make generalisations for all of Indonesia, but have picked cases which shed clear light on the relationship between violence and urban space. For the case of (large-scale) communal violence, I have chosen Kota Ambon for two reasons: because it has generated an ample literature and I have had the chance to do some fieldwork there in 2015. Lynching is unevenly spread over different places, but best documented in Jakarta. For the study of the spatial consequences of thugs and vigilantes I have again chosen Jakarta, not only because studies are relatively abundant here, but also because of the peculiar role of thugs in the national capital, where they can be hired as shock troops by political leaders. What connects the cases is the increased incidence of violence stimulated by the fall of President Soeharto in 1998.

## Explaining violence in Indonesia

An essential first step in the analysis of the nexus between violence and the production of urban space is to take position in the debate about the most current explanations of the violence in Indonesia. Some of the explanations are better suited to a spatial analysis than others.

Indonesia, the fourth most populous country in the world, has a long history of violence. Two colonial powers, the Netherlands (up to 1942) and Japan (1942–1945), often did not hesitate to unleash savage aggression to subjugate the country and keep the people under their respective thumbs. During the Indonesian Revolution (1945–1949), revolutionaries turned violently against both Dutch citizens and their own

people. The first decades of independence were marred by bloody uprisings against the central government. Violence reached new heights during the long dictatorship of President Soeharto (1966–1998). The rise to power of this army general had been accompanied by the crushing of the Indonesian Communist Party and, according to estimates, the killing of half a million people accused of being a communist. Soeharto's rule, known as the New Order (*Orde Baru*), was characterised by frequent controlled outbursts of state violence employed against its own citizens. Although the majority of Indonesians were kept ignorant of most of this tactic, some of it was deliberately put on display, for instance, the corpses of summarily executed criminals left by the roadside. The most blatant cases of state violence kept from the public eye were the suppression of an in itself violent secessionist movement in the province of Aceh and the invasion and subsequent incorporation of East Timor (1975), which according to a careful estimate exacted a death toll of 80,000 people out of a total population of 700,000 (Cribb 2001).

The years just before and after the fall of Soeharto were characterised by a sharp increase in what seemed to be new forms of violence: communal violence between religiously and ethnically defined groups and mob violence against petty criminals and other persons deemed to be morally deviant. The number of casualties claimed by the various forms of violence peaked in 1999, one year after the fall of Soeharto, and the number of violent incidents (but with fewer deaths in total) hit its highest point one year later, when Indonesia had 1.4 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), the largest number of IDPs in the world at the time (Hedman 2008: 4; Varshney, Tadjoeeddin & Panggabean 2010: 35). Unlike most of the state violence perpetrated under Soeharto's aegis, the communal violence was given widespread publicity for two reasons: the easing of the strict control of the press at the time and because it was concentrated in urban centres. It was this previously unheard of communal violence – and three days of rioting in Jakarta just prior to the downfall of Soeharto – which shocked the Indonesian public most and attracted considerable academic attention.

The level of violence was considerably reduced in the period that followed Soeharto's rule, called the *Reformasi* era, although not always for positive reasons. Communal violence in Kalimantan died down because one party, the Madurese, was expelled from the island. Violence against the East Timorese terminated after the people voted for independence in a plebiscite (which itself set off a final upsurge in violence by armed militia who opposed independence). In Aceh, a peace settlement between the Indonesian army and soldiers from the independence movement was finally reached after protracted negotiations, sadly helped by the devastating effects of the 2004 tsunami which required that all the parties unite in a joint effort to rebuild the area. In Papua, where no such major event as a plebiscite or a tsunami has intervened, state violence against (unarmed) citizens has continued into the Post-Soeharto era (Amnesty International 2012; ICG 2012a). The outburst of communal bloodshed just before President Soeharto stepped down and in the early years of the *Reformasi* sparked off widespread public and academic debate about the causes behind the violence in Indonesia. The explanations put forward can, I believe, be roughly grouped into three categories.

A first group of explanations of the outbreak of violence, often espoused in popular circles but criticised by scholars, has a cultural basis. People have argued that some of the ethnic groups involved in the communal violence have a reputation for headhunting (Dayaks), or being hot tempered (Ambonese, as I was told by Ambonese themselves).

Others have remarked that all Indonesians are prone to run *amok*. Military commanders responsible for army violence against civilians have sometimes adduced this alleged predisposition to *amok* as an excuse for the grisly acts perpetrated by their subordinates. Yet others have remarked that the shadow puppet theatre (*wayang*) offers a discourse of violence. This sort of cultural explanation is based on a static, essentialising and deterministic understanding of culture, one that anthropologists long ago assigned to obsolescence. A more subtle cultural argument is that too rapid a modernisation had resulted in *anomie*, moral disorientation (e.g. Braithwaite 2013), but many scholars are not inclined to take this argument very seriously either (Bubandt 2001; Sidel 2001: 48; Cribb 2002: 556; Collins 2002; Colombijn 2005; Koppel 2006: 13–14). In any case, when violence is understood in these cultural terms, there is no inherent relationship between violence and urban space.

A second group of explanations stresses the competition for scarce resources, exacerbated by the economic deprivation caused by the then Asian Crisis (e.g. Galtung 2005; Mancini 2005; Stewart 2005; Tadjoeiddin and Murshed 2007). For instance, indigenous Dayak and immigrant Madurese people were purportedly fighting to control the scarce forestland in West and Central Kalimantan (Dove 1997). At first sight, this second group of explanations opens up an analysis based on competition for urban land. Unfortunately, however, although the rising competition for scarce resources might make the reason certain groups clash comprehensible, it does not explain why these groups resort to violence to resolve the conflict. For a Dayak man, it is one step to hate a Madurese newcomer because he occupies a good plot of land, but another, larger step to decapitate the said Madurese in order to seize control of that plot. An explanation based on competition for scarce resources is particularly weak when it comes to explaining the gruesomeness of much of the violence. Another powerful counter-argument against this kind of analysis is, of course, provided by the many instances in which deprived groups compete over scarce resources without coming to violent blows with each other. As Ingo Schröder and Bettina Schmidt (2001: 2) succinctly put it: ‘Violence results from competition neither automatically nor inevitably’.

Elements of the first two categories of explanation recur in the third group of actor-oriented explanations. Scholars espousing this view give up the ‘fruitless search for ultimate causes that ignores the dynamics of events’ (Brass 1997:8) and begin looking at the conditions, mounting tensions, moves and counter-moves among the people involved. It could be objected that this perspective is more an approach than a theory and that an explanation based on the agency of the perpetrators – their interpretations, strategies and acts – is merely descriptive. However, as Ernest Gellner (1983: 139) points out: ‘Once we describe the phenomenon we are interested in with precision, we come close to explaining it correctly. (Perhaps we can only describe things well when we have already understood them.)’. This actor-oriented group of explanations lends itself well to a spatial analysis, because participants in violence can interpret urban space either as a contested prize in the conflict, or as tool, or obstacle in the violent act itself.

A fine example of such an actor-oriented approach is a comparative political study of six major cases of communal violence in Indonesia in the years 1997–2001, written by Gerry van Klinken. Van Klinken argues that the violence is best understood as part of normal politics in crisis mode, taking the form of a social movement. Although some of the violence was *ad hoc* and spun out of control, much of it was carefully orchestrated, not by ‘provocateurs’ from the army or central government as many analysts believed at



the time, but by local politicians.<sup>2</sup> The rent-seeking local elite vied for local state resources, including state budgets, state-controlled natural resources and profitable licences, or for positions, a situation that could be exploited by corrupt civil servants. Their eyes set on concrete goals, leaders set about organising their support by mobilising non-elite followers through their patronage networks and by playing on dormant ethnic or religious suspicions. Violence broke out when local political rivals mobilised previously disorganised and inactive followers, by the expedient of constructing clear but opposing identities, polarised around two extremes (Christian versus Muslim, Dayak versus Madurese, etc.) and in the process raised the conflict to a higher scale (Van Klinken 2007).

One crucial step in this actor-oriented approach is that people who are inclined to be non-violent must learn to use violence in a process which social psychologists call 'social learning' (Bandura 1977). People experiment with and might adopt violent behaviour simply because they discover that they are rather attracted by it; perhaps they can profit from the violence or they experience sadistic or Machiavellian pleasure from doing harm to others (Colombijn 2005). Social learning theory allows ample scope for the agency of the perpetrators, without being deterministic. The possibility that people offer individual and different interpretations of the violent situations explains 'why not all members of a given society, or group, are necessarily equally accepting of the use of violence to resolve problems' (Steenkamp 2005: 255).

An actor-oriented approach combined with social learning theory leans heavily towards rational choice theory, whereas violence often appears irrational. However, my contention is that social learning in no way excludes the emotional reasons people participate in violent actions, especially after one side has suffered irreversible losses and desires vengeance (Bar-Tal 2003).

In this context, Nils Bubandt (2008) has noted that hearsay and smudged photocopied pamphlets, known as *xeroxclore*, played a primary role in spreading the rumours which mobilised enraged armed supporters and created a 'climate' of fear (Spyer 2002). The hyper-reality of gossip can take on a life of its own. For instance, rumours of gruesome Christian violence against Muslims in North Maluku (eyes of victims gouged out, the disembowelment and beheading of bodies, which were finally doused with petrol and set on fire) were copied step by step by Muslims who attacked Christians. This is a concrete manifestation of violence as learnt behaviour, or as Bubandt (2008: 802) states: rumours did not only provide ethical justification but also 'a mythopractical guideline about how to enact the violence'.

The *xeroxclore* in Ambon is an example of the general importance of imageries. While it is conceivable that physical violence can sometimes reshape urban space directly, for instance, the bulldozing of Palestine homes by Israeli soldiers (Azoulay 2013), violence can impact on space just as well via the imagination. Violence is an idiom (Aijmer 2000) through which messages are conveyed, not only between perpetrator and victim, but also to the third corner in the 'triangle of violence', the audience (Strathern & Stewart 2006: 5). Isolated events need to be contextualised to imbue them with meaning and it is through the contextualisation that violence becomes a social factor of itself. There is not one, but a multiplicity of contextualisations and every contextualisation serves the interest of some force in society (Brass 1997: 12, 267). Contradictory contextualisations clearly played a crucial role in the communal violence in Ambon.



## Communal violence: the case of Kota Ambon

Varshney, Tadjoeeddin and Panggabean (2010: 37) state that communal (that is, inter-ethnic and inter-religious) violence accounted for almost 90% of all violent deaths in Indonesia between 1990 and 2003, by far the greatest majority concentrated in the years 1997–2001.

At each end of the spectrum, both authoritarian and democratic states are capable of maintaining central authority and preventing this kind of communal violence, but a state in transition from authoritarian to democratic rule offers conditions in which a violent social movement can flourish (Bertrand 2004: 4). Building up a mass movement became essential, precisely because of the democratisation. Local leaders' access to state resources was no longer mediated by personal links between provinces and districts and the central government, but determined by success in local elections. A zero-sum logic was applied to these elections, and by extension, to the appropriation of state resources (Sidel 2006: 171–176; Van Klinken 2007: 9–10, 23–26; Davidson 2009).

Although the formation of passionate communal identities, strong enough to make people reach for their arms, was not confined just to urban areas, the cities did play an essential role, and not merely a backdrop to the events. Van Klinken has therefore given his just cited study of communal violence the sub-title *Small town wars*, leaving it an open-ended question whether this should be read as small-town wars, or small town-wars. The towns are essential to his analysis, not because of spatial features, but because of their idiosyncratic economies. In these small towns (provincial and district capitals), the population had grown rapidly without a concomitant growth in employment, and the small middle-class, from which the organisers of the violence emerged, was heavily dependent on the state as their major source of income. The policy of decentralisation combined with shrinking state resources stimulated the local elite in the small towns to resort to violence in order to mobilise a following (see also Sidel 2006: 98–105; Van Klinken 2007).

Kota Ambon (Ambon City) offers a prime example of a small town war, in particular of the mutual impact of urban space and a violent social movement. Before religious violence broke out, the spatial divisions in Kota Ambon consisted of various layers and its residents had multiple socio-spatial identities. One layer was a fine mosaic of Muslim and Christian wards, which were never absolutely mono-religious. Another layer consisted of the division between the wards inhabited by ethnic Ambonese, be they Muslim or Christian, and wards occupied by recent migrants (mostly Muslim). The ethnic Ambonese could also be sub-divided into families which already inhabited the princely domains of the island before the beginnings of urbanisation. These people consequently had detailed, local knowledge of supernatural forces and claimed landownership on the basis of oral tradition, as opposed to settlers who had come later from the surrounding villages. Crosscutting these divisions was an administrative territorial division (Mearns 1999). This palimpsest of multiple spatial divisions would be condensed into a one-dimensional, total division between the disconnected Muslim and Christian halves of the city as a result of the violence which engulfed Kota Ambon and the rest of the Moluccas from 1999 to 2002.

Skirmishes broke out between Protestant Ambonese and Muslim migrants on 19 January 1999. A small incident at a bus terminal was framed by both sides as a Christian–Muslim conflict and, within hours, more or less *ad hoc* formed gangs from the predominantly Muslim Batu Merah and predominantly Christian Mardika

neighbourhoods began to attack each other. In the space of a few days, the violence spread to other neighbourhoods and, not long afterwards, to villages outside the city. Such fights had happened before, but what was new was the speed with which the violence spread to other neighbourhoods and the scale of the killing and destruction. Fighting repeatedly subsided and flared up again in the next days and weeks. Half a year later, fighting intensified again and now all Muslims (not only migrants) united against all Christians (including Roman Catholics and Chinese migrants) (Bertrand 2004: 124–128; Sidel 2006: 177–179; Van Klinken 2007: 98–100). The violent imaginaries were amplified by misinformation and rumours, which flourished in and profited from the general state of uncertainty and anxiety (Spyer 2002; Bräuchler 2003; Bubandt 2008).

Identities were hardened in the sequence of attacks (Strathern & Stewart 2006: 7) and the previously multiple, context-dependent, social identities of the residents were reduced to a single, all-pervading Muslim–Christian dichotomy. When I talked to people in 2015 –really pleasant, right-minded people–, they told me how they inevitably had become involved in the fights, or ‘war’ (*perang*) as they called it.<sup>3</sup> Even though the majority were ‘*survivor saja*’ (only survivors), they had taken part in defending their own areas and had occasionally launched attacks. People from different religions who had lived in a mixed neighbourhood and lost their houses to fire were not united by a shared victimhood, but grew suspicious of each other. Several informants assured me that they could indubitably identify strangers as Christians and Muslims, not only because of, for instance, tattoos, crosses or a veil, but also because, as a Muslim woman asserted, Muslims ‘get a different face’ as a result of the regular ritual ablutions before prayers.<sup>4</sup>

The reduction of the complex social fabric to an all-pervading Muslim–Christian dichotomy quickly found expression in the residential pattern of Kota Ambon. People living in wards numerically dominated by the ‘other’ religion moved to an area of their own religious persuasion to save their lives. In fact, displacement of people was the aim of much of the fighting. Subsequent fighting removed religious enclaves and straightened the border, marked by oil drums placed there as barricades. Arson squads consisting of young children burnt down houses and mosques and churches in the ‘Other’ territory. The symbolic and strategic centres of both turfs, the Al Fatah Mosque and the Maranatha Church, stood just 300 metres apart (Aditjondro 2001: 101; Van Klinken 2007: 99–100; Sidel 2008).

My informants recalled how neighbours of a different religion usually lived in peace, until resentful refugees from one religion entered the area. After consulting people of the majority religion, residents from the minority religion left, because they no longer felt safe; sometimes they were intimidated by people shouting at them and stoning their houses. After they left, the refugees occupied the vacant homes. Where neighbourhoods were religiously balanced, people would be afraid to occupy vacated houses fearing the troubles which might ensue, and preferred to destroy the abandoned houses. Only one *kampung*, Wayame, remained mixed throughout the fights, not only owing to the strong community, but also because it lay too close to an army camp guarding the oil tanks of the island.

The spatial effects went much farther than residential segregation. The Muslim and Christian parts of the city were separated by what was dubbed the Jalur Gaza (Gaza Strip), a neutral zone which could not be crossed without risking one’s life. New segregated markets and schools were set up in the areas dominated by each community. Institutions, such as state offices, which were supposed to remain neutral but lay in

one of the segregated halves of the cities were moved out of the city because, had this measure not been taken, civil servants of the other religion could not have reached their offices safely (Aditjondro 2001: 101; Bertrand 2004: 129).

Even though the segregation offered immediate security from lethal violence, it also caused practical problems which had to be overcome. For instance, as one man recounted, government offices were set up in the respective halves of the city in order to allow both civil servants and citizens to reach the office safely. Nevertheless, officials from both offices had somehow to co-ordinate their activities and met occasionally at the Military Hospital, which was neutral ground, situated precisely on the Jalur Gaza and accessible from both sides. When the worst of the fighting was over, fish caught by Christians would be loaded onto a pickup truck with a Christian driver. At the Jalur Gaza, the driver was replaced by a Muslim, who transported the fish to the market in Muslim territory.

In sum, the various overlaying, pre-1999 spatial divisions, – based on religion, migration areas, princely domains and state divisions – were narrowed down to a ‘religiously coded topography’ (Sidel 2008: 58), with an ‘interlocking binary spatial grid and inside/outside polarities’ (Allen Feldman, cited by Sidel 2008: 58). The rigorously marked, religious territories became ‘concentrated pools of resentment and bitterness’ (Spyer 2002: 6).

Did the end of hostilities produce new spatial effects, reconfiguring the city and perhaps undoing some of the changes caused by the violence? In 2002, the two sides signed a peace treaty negotiated under the auspices of the central government (Braithwaite 2013). It is significant that Ambonese desirous of celebrating the peace settlement did so by symbolically reclaiming the use of the space of the whole city. Hundreds of youngsters from a cluster of Muslim and Christian villages walked around the city, deliberately crossing Muslim–Christian boundaries; others joined the circumambulation on the way. A fleet of Muslim and Christian speedboats sailed on the Gulf of Ambon in a joint flotilla, on which hitherto enemy ships would have been fired upon from the coast. Also in the first week after the treaty had been signed, Christian women shopped in Ambon Plaza in the Muslim part of the city (Böhm 2003: 83).

In the mid-term, adjacent neighbourhoods belonging to different religions dismantled their barricades. Furthermore, new marketplaces and shopping areas were created as places in which Muslims and Christians could meet (Sidel 2006: 185). The mayor announced he wanted to close all alternative government offices in order to centralise all offices, serving both Muslims and Christians (Böhm 2003: 84).

Despite these efforts to create new public spaces, my informants unanimously stated that Ambon literally lacks common ground in which people from different religions can meet. The city is poorly planned and has no green spaces. Schools have not become an inter-religious meeting place, because children go to a school in their neighbourhood and these neighbourhoods are segregated. People might patronise shops with a proprietor from the other religion, but Muslims are afraid to visit Christian eating places, worried they might be served tabooed pork. The central sports field annex square behind the provincial office, Lapangan Merdeka, and the adjacent Medan Pattimura, is the only large open space. This is where one of my young Christian informants meets her Muslim friends, who are afraid to visit her at home. Lapangan Merdeka is also the place on which state ceremonies are held, for instance, on Independence Day, and so-called peace concerts (*konser perdamaian*) at which pop and hip-hop music using lyrics

about peace are performed. Small peace concerts on the pavement take place almost every month, deliberately designed to bring youngsters from both religions together.

The only public space designed to commemorate the past violence officially has not really come alive. The International Peace Gong was established in an open space near Lapangan Merdeka. Locally it is called the Peace Gong (the word International is left off), despite symbols of all imaginable global religions and national flags of all countries in the world. Visiting politicians and celebrities, like Arnold Schwarzenegger, have their pictures taken in front of the gong, but locals stay away, if only because a ticket must be purchased to enter the ground. Precisely because of its official status and the celebrity visitors, the International Peace Gong does not function as a 'grassroots memorial' memorialising traumatic death (Colombijn 2007; Margry & Sánchez-Carretero 2011; Melchior 2015).

The lack of neutral meeting ground became inadvertently apparent during the interviews. I spoke to two Christian informants in a coffee bar on the Christian side of the former Jalur Gaza, near the Silo Church, and a Muslim in a coffee bar next to the Al Fatah mosque. Others I met in even more explicitly religiously marked spaces like a church and the Islamic State University. As my interlocutors drove me around, they made a remark when we happened to pass a to me invisible border and entered a residential area of a different religion. Nowadays people do enter areas of the other religion, but will be on the alert if they have to be there. Usually they have no reason to visit there.

One project devised to overcome physical and mental barriers was called 'live-in', a project run with Canadian support. Protestant ministers would spend one night in a Muslim family. The idea of sleeping in a Muslim neighbourhood caused these reverend gentlemen tremendous anxiety. Participants sought last-minute excuses not to go, charged their cell phones to the full and 80% worried what they should say as an opening sentence and what to talk about. 'Live-in' turned out to be a very emotional yet successful activity. All the ministers stayed away much longer than required and food was exchanged afterwards. Hosts and guests discovered shared concerns like a jobless partner or children's poor school records. One Muslim host asked the minister upon his return to light a candle in church for a child with cancer. After the pilot with the ministers in 2005, the programme was expanded to teachers and children and Muslims also stayed with Christian families. One place in which people 'cross religion' (*lintas agama*) on a more permanent basis are inter-religious hobby clubs, for instance, for photography, poetry, hip-hop music, nature and football.

One of the eleven clauses in the 2002 peace treaty stipulated that refugees were free to return to their area of origin, but without being forced to do so (Böhm 2003: 81). However, when push came to shove, the government resettled returning refugees in mono-religious areas. Although this policy might have prevented renewed conflict in the short run, it did stand in the way of reconciliation. To give but one example, Christians who had fled the Batu Merah neighbourhood in Kota Ambon could not return because their houses had been occupied by Muslims, who in their turn had been expelled from other wards. The displaced Christians have been resettled in a camp and the physical distance between Batu Merah and the camp 'hinders unrestrained social interaction between the two [religious] communities' which once lived together in Batu Merah. The upshot is that the social gap is actually widening (Adam 2009: 146).

Access to urban land has now emerged as a new bone of contention, driven not only because of the economic value of the land, but also because of its role in social identity

formation (Adam 2009, 2010). People who do not or cannot return to their old house or plot of land have tried to sell it to the new occupant or to swap houses with somebody from the other religion.

On the whole, physical segregation and mutual distrust between Christian and Muslim communities have refused to go away (ICG 2012b). Even Citraland, a gated community with upper-class housing and security guards, has failed to become a mixed area. Local Muslims certainly do not want to live there because it is located in a Christian area. A new Muslim manager of a national assurance company who rented a house there left after a month after other Muslims continually warned him it was unsafe. However, to end on a positive note, borders are allegedly beginning to rent rooms in areas of the other religion.

Permanent spatial effects of the peace settlement can only be expected if peace lasts and reconciliation succeeds to some degree. There was a new outbreak of inter-religious violence in September 2011, following rumours that a Muslim *ojek* (motorcycle taxi) driver, who had actually been killed in a traffic accident, had been tortured to death by Christians. Eight people died in the ensuing fights. Spatial effects were immediately visible: residents put up roadblocks, at least 4,000 refugees moved out of the contested areas of the town, and around 200 buildings were damaged or burned to the ground (ICG 2011; Mercy Corps 2011; *The Jakarta Post* 11–9–2011 to 14–9–2011; *Kompas* 11–9–2011). Violence broke out again in December 2011 (ICG 2012b) and May 2012 (*Kompas* 15–5–2012; *The Jakarta Post* 21–5–2012). In response to these outbreaks, an informal organisation which called itself *Provokator Damai* (Peace Provocateurs) was set up; it used cellular phones to rectify false rumours (ICG 2011, 2012b; Qurtuby 2013: 358). If imagination flourishes where uncertainty and rumour abound (Strathern & Stewart 2006: 14), correct information can put a halt to communal violence. Many Ambonese believe that the speed with which the violence was quelled showed that the situation is really improving (Van Dis 2015).

Nevertheless, these recent outbursts confirm that violence cannot be easily unlearned. A worried leading figure in the Christian community told me that the children who burnt down houses in 2011 and 2012 had been toddlers in 1999. They had learnt from prevalent ‘narratives’ (Schröder & Schmidt 2001: 10) and felt that now it was their responsibility to stand up for their community, using knowledge of the techniques of arson they gleaned from the same narratives. Social learning theory suggests that it is more effective to teach people new, positive patterns of behaviour than to unlearn, old destructive patterns (Colombijn 2005: 266–268). Therefore it is very positive that, according to most of my informants, nowadays fighting against the other religion is no longer considered heroic and a road to social status, but is looked down upon: ‘It is trendy to talk peace’ (*Sekarang orang berbicara damai. Damai tren*).

Importantly, there is one other thing that people have learnt which has a spatial effect. People have lost their respect for rules, and consequently solid waste is thrown away along the roadside everywhere. Ambon used to be a clean city before the violence, but has become dirty since it broke out.

### Social violence: lynching petty criminals in Jakarta

In contrast to communal violence, which earmarks categories of people who are collectively held liable, lynching targets individuals deemed guilty of some perceived breach

(Senechal de la Roche 1996: 103). The lynching of petty criminals or ‘mob justice’ is a form of violence much closer to home for most Indonesians than the communal violence in Ambon and a few other small towns. Pickpockets and burglars caught red-handed can be beaten up, sometimes even killed, by a crowd. The incidence of lynching also increased after the fall of Soeharto and peaked in 2001 (Tadié 2009: 186; Welsh 2010: 126–128). Many observers thought they were dealing with a totally novel phenomenon, the direct result of the partial collapse of the state during the *Reformasi*. The state was seen as either being incapable of doing anything or too corrupt to punish thieves, and the mobs felt that, if they took the law into their own hands, they would be able to do so with impunity. Although the transition from authoritarian to democratic rule and the concomitant temporary waning of state power no doubt widened the opportunity for mob justice (Tadié 2009: 196–200; Welsh 2010: 120, 138–139), lynching is actually a much older form of summary justice, with cases recorded during the New Order, the Indonesian Revolution, colonial and pre-colonial times (Colombijn 2002). Hence, although the breakdown of state authority might explain the increased incidence of mob justice, it cannot explain its existence.

Crime statistics show that most of the petty criminals apprehended were actually handed over to the police without being lynched. Nevertheless, newspaper reports of lynching in Metropolitan Jakarta (and the province of Riau, Sumatra) from 2000 provide evidence that, once a lynching was set in motion, bystanders knew what to do and felt no qualms about joining in the rampage. Mob justice could take hold when somebody yelled ‘thief, thief’ and bystanders began to pursue the suspect, without bothering to check what the alleged culprit had actually done (Colombijn 2002). In other words, lynching belonged to the standard ‘repertoire of collective behaviour’ (Tilly 1981: 19) and people knew which ‘scenario’ (Tadié 2009: 188) or ‘violent ritual’ (Welsh 2010: 121) to follow once a lynching was under way.

The lynch victims were placed outside the moral order. The petty thieves were almost always strangers in the place in which they were caught, therefore their status as an outsider excluded them from the usual rules of respectful conduct owed to other human beings. Moreover, the goal of a lynching was to expunge the victim of any human traits. He – it was always a male – was stripped of his clothes and his face, the prime expression of his humanity, was beaten to a pulp, sometimes his eyeballs would be gouged out and his ears ripped off. Setting victims alight and charring their bodies made their humanity even more unrecognisable. In other words, the victims were dehumanised by the attack, excluding them even more from society and hence they had forfeited the right to protection offered by the norms which apply only to ‘fellow humans’ (see also Bråten 2002: 27–29; Colombijn 2002; Herriman 2006: 96; Bar-Tal 2003; Tadié 2009: 191). In the words of Giorgio Agamben, they became ‘bare life’ (*homo sacer*) (Agamben in Jansen 2015).

The acceptance of ‘mob justice’ as a legitimate way of dealing with petty criminals and the common knowledge about details of the scenario of a lynching can both be explained by imitation or ‘social learning’ (Herriman 2006: 100; Welsh 2010: 120, 126–130). The expunging of the rights of petty criminals has become a norm in itself and local leaders have condoned the idea that mob justice is ‘acceptable’ or ‘normal’ and appropriate behaviour (see also Tadié 2009: 189; Welsh 2010: 123, 129). Novices already had knowledge of the deed, even if they had never participated in it before. Newspaper reports played an important role in this respect, sometimes quite



deliberately, for instance, a comic strip in the local tabloid newspaper *Pos Kota* instructed Jakartans how to set a body alight. Two persons who had repeatedly taken part in lynchings recalled how they had learnt about other cases from the newspapers (Colombijn 2002; Welsh 2010: 134–135). Local variation in the act can also be partly attributed to social learning (Colombijn 2002).

One weakness in social learning theory is that it allows a crude, popular notion of culture to slip in again through the backdoor, because socially learnt, shared repertoires of behaviour come very close to current anthropological ways of defining ‘culture’ (Eriksen 2010: 3). To avoid the essentialising connotations attached to the popular use of the term ‘culture’, I prefer to speak of a ‘cultural practice’ of violence and lynching is a prime example of it. By a cultural practice of violence, I mean that the use of violence is one of the culturally appropriate ways of acting against specific persons in certain, specific situations; the victims of the violence have usually been excluded from the moral community, so that they were placed beyond the boundaries of the ‘normal’ rules of inter-human conduct. In this understanding of culture, using violence is one of the options, but not the only possible, predetermined line of action (cf. Bar-Tal 2003; Colombijn 2005; Steenkamp 2005: 254–255).

Lynching interacts with urban space in two ways. One nexus between lynching and urban space is the patterned incidence of lynching. Some residential areas in Metropolitan Jakarta, such as Tangerang and Bekasi, and some specific places, such as the Rambutan Bus Terminal, have had a high incidence of lynching. As far as can be discerned, there is no correlation between the incidence of lynching and the ethnic make-up, class or crime statistics of a neighbourhood. The reason specific kampongs tend to lynch criminals is to send out a warning to strangers. Therefore, Jérôme Tadié argues that it would be better to interpret lynching as a form of territorial control than as mob justice (Tadié 2009: 203–207). Thieves are aware that also for them there are go and no-go zones in a city; the possibility of mob justice being meted out to intruders creates ‘virtual checkpoints’ and boundaries in the city (Migdal 2004: 9).

The other spatial feature of lynching is the fact that the beating and incineration of criminals is carried out in *public* space and becomes a public spectacle. The public beating and burning of the captured thief has, of course, a strong performative element, and metaphors for lynching as a ‘script’, ‘ritual’ or part of a ‘repertoire’ also refer to the performative aspect of the violence (Colombijn 2002; Welsh 2010: 121). Some participants in mob violence saw a certain aesthetic side to the drama (Bråten 2002: 19–20). In the minds of the actors, their relationship with an audience in the triangle of violence seems to matter more than their relationship with the poor victims.

Recalling that ‘[v]iolence without an audience will still leave people dead, but [ ... ] is socially meaningless’ (Schröder & Schmidt 2001: 5–6), the question becomes who is the audience at this gruesome performance. A possible answer has already been given: the violence is a message to other criminals. Another answer, which does not necessarily contradict the first answer, has been provided by Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat (2006), who argue that sovereignty rests on the use of violence against *homo sacer*. By perpetrating violence against the ‘bare life’, the local community might be able to establish its sovereignty in its relationship to the state.

On the basis of the data above, we can conclude that lynching also has a spatial aspect, but the lynchings in Jakarta and the communal violence in Kota Ambon operated in a different kind of urban space. The communal violence in Ambon impacted



primarily on the material, physical space, either directly (burning down dwellings and prayer houses) or indirectly through a changed residential pattern and the creation of new markets and offices.<sup>5</sup> In contrast to this physical, private space, lynching occurs in public space. Behaviour in public spaces is not regulated by ownership and tenure, but by norms of conduct and social interaction (Lefebvre 1986: 69–70; Low 1996; Smith & Low 2006: 3–4). Another spatial difference between communal violence and lynching is the direction of the effect: in Ambon, the violence restructured urban space, but in the case of lynching, spatial features structure the violence.

### Vigilantes for hire in Jakarta

Arguably the kind of violence, bar domestic violence, of which most Indonesians have had personal experience is the brutality meted out by thugs. Thugs go by different names, but the most common is probably *preman*.<sup>6</sup> An important source of income for *preman* is operating mafia-style protection rackets, which they run to extort money from such victims as shopkeepers and street vendors.

The basis of their activity is control of a certain turf which might be a particular market, bus terminal or parking area, often won or defended in fights with other *preman*. Only when they have a hold over a territory, with the backing of the military, police or other authorities, can they begin to demand money for their ‘protection’ from the small entrepreneurs working in that space (Tadié 2002: 410–416; Lindsey 2006: 29–30; Wilson 2006: 266; Tadié 2009: 243, 271–295; Bertrand 2010: 80). By and large, the power of a *preman* is measured in spatial terms. He can extend his territorial control by manipulating a combination of machismo, the cultivation of belief in his magical strength and his fighting skills, never forgetting his good relationships with actors wielding formal power such as the police (Wilson 2012: 122). Alongside the actual use of violence, violent imaginaries of the *preman* are essential to effectively controlling his turf (Schröder & Schmidt 2001: 2).

Their activities extend to offering their services to the state and politicians and again the historical roots go deep, to colonial times, the Revolution, the early years of Independence and the New Order. Both the state and individual politicians have employed bands of thugs and vigilantes to commit gruesome violence against opponents (including the Indonesian Communist Party), to suggest a large following during election campaigns, to intimidate opponents and to create disorder and chaos in the streets when this was for some reason desirable (Cribb 1991; Schulte Nordholt & Van Till 1999; Lindsey 2006: 31–32; Tadié 2009: 246; Wilson 2012: 121; Kloos 2014). Although I have no direct evidence of how thugs or their patrons learn how to use violence, the long tradition of vigilantism strongly suggests that also here social learning plays a key role in the continuity.

Unquestionably the bands of thugs are more openly violent than the people who employ them and they are also buoyed up by the feeling that they enjoy a certain degree of impunity, because they can always retreat behind their high connections. Their reputation as thugs allows them to act with a level of ferocity for which their patrons do not want to be held publicly accountable (Colombijn & Lindblad 2002: 20–22). The looting, raping and killing that occurred in Jakarta in May 1998, just days prior to Soeharto’s resignation from the presidency, is a terrible example of the use of *preman*. The connection between *preman*, the military and the state – or the

blurring of the boundaries between these actors – was unmistakable (Purdey 2005: 106–128; Sidel 2006: 121–124; Hedman 2008: 22).

Although the *Reformasi* did not put the thugs out of business, their organisation did become more splintered. When Soeharto bowed out, the patronage networks of which he was the apex fell apart and the *preman* suddenly found they were bereft of the protection of both the military and the state, but it seemed that many of the new political parties were employing their own vigilantes in their efforts to mobilise voters and seize control of the state apparatus. The disengaged *preman*, now in search of new patrons, were more than willing to do the bidding of the parties (Lindsey 2006: 30; Wilson 2006: 266–270; Davidson 2009: 304; Bertrand 2010: 82).

The *Reformasi* also saw the emergence of a new style of explicitly Muslim vigilantism, as much a response to political changes on the national level as to the global Islamist opposition to non-Muslim forces. The best example is the Front Pembela Islam (Front of Defenders of Islam, established in 1998), which styled itself on the model of Middle Eastern Muslim warriors, adopting Arab dress and flourishing sabres in public demonstrations on the street.

Because they made deliberate spatial interventions, the appearance of Muslim vigilantes on the streets has had a peculiar impact on cities. The Front Pembela Islam attacked brothels, hotels renting rooms to prostitutes, gambling dens and shops selling alcoholic beverages, all of which they claimed were irreconcilable to the tenets of Islam, especially during Ramadan. Although they failed to cleanse the city of such establishments, they certainly succeeded in driving the more visible aspects of such activities off the street, especially after they had received the tacit support of the municipal government (Sidel 2006: 137–140; Wilson 2006: 282–285; Bertrand 2010: 73, 84; Kusno 2010: 38–39).

The vigilantes had even a bigger impact on urban form when they were actually employed by the Jakarta city government to achieve spatial policies prioritised by the state, but which the state lacked the muscle to achieve during the *Reformasi* (Kusno 2010: 39). As Jamie Davidson (2009: 305) remarks: ‘Government officials [ ... ] resort to excessive force to ‘enforce the law’ by outsourcing intimidation and repression to militias. Land clearing in Jakarta for such infrastructure projects as the extension of drainage canals or railroad tracks has been exemplary. In the employ of the municipal government, gangs of thugs have used disproportionate force, including rape and murder, to evict tens of thousands squatters, renters and landowners.’ The governor of Jakarta also hired vigilantes to attack any of the urban poor who dared to protest against his urban development policies (Wilson 2006: 279).<sup>7</sup>

Finally, the violence committed by thugs stimulated civilians to take further spatial measures. In May 1998, terrified citizens barricaded their neighbourhoods. Later, when the barricades were removed, more permanent gates which are closed at night were installed and perhaps the height of fences around houses was raised (Purdey 2005: 140; Tadié 2009: 146–148). Paradoxically, with trust in the state at a low ebb, private groups employ vigilantes to guard their security. For instance, the residents of Kemang, an upper-class neighbourhood in Jakarta, weary of the Front Pembela Islam raids and the failure of the police to take action, organised their own civilian vigilantes for protection (Wilson 2006: 269–270, 288). As a consequence of the various security measures taken in response to the pervasive threat of violence, urban space has fragmented. As Abidin Kusno (2010: 37) succinctly puts it: ‘The “looseness” at the [political]

centre encourages citizens of Jakarta to act on their own, creating a condition in which everyone safeguards his or her own space, often without much regard for the public’.

## Conclusion

Veena Das’ (2006: 1) contention that a violent event ‘attaches itself with its tentacles into the everyday life and folds itself into the recess of the ordinary’ can be extended to the alleys, squares, streets and avenues of a city. In this article, I have tried to analyse how different forms of violence have been inscribed onto the urban space of two Indonesian cities after the demise of President Soeharto in 1998. The principle that urban space is socially produced and that conversely urban space structures human behaviour (Lefebvre 1974) also applies to violence as an instance of human behaviour.

However, contrary to most studies of urban space, in which the main actors with their overt and hidden goals can and must be clearly identified (the municipal government, a real estate developer, street vendors, NGOs and so forth), the perpetrators of violence are often unknown. Perpetrators remain hidden behind rumours or stay anonymous in a lynching mob. The spatial consequences of violence are therefore, if I may paraphrase William Frederick (2002), ‘shadows of an unseen hand’.

Consequently, unlike in studies that focus on, for instance, the construction of a mall by an investor or a mosque by a migrant community, when it is essential to analyse the strength of the main actors, in a study of the spatial impact of violence, it does not matter so much who exactly commits the violence. What is peculiar about the relationship between urban space and violence, is that the strength and prevailing direction of the mutual impact between space and behaviour depends on the severity of violence, real or imagined, and the social status of the victims.

The lynching of petty criminals has the least impact on urban space, because the incidence is low compared to the other forms discussed, and the violence is directed ‘merely’ at moral outcasts. Lynching does not produce a change in the physical makeup of the city, but, conversely, the specific features of urban space structure the violence. More concretely, the actors in a lynch party exploit the public character of the street to broadcast their message of territorial control and the sovereignty of the local community.

The violence committed by vigilantes makes more impact on the reconfiguration of urban space than lynching. The direct impact by the actual violence is negligible,<sup>8</sup> but the indirect impact of imaginaries of vigilante violence is considerable. Terrified citizens take spatial precautions to protect themselves against anticipated vigilante attacks. When vigilantes are hired by the city government to evict squatters, they prepare the ground for large-scale urban development projects.

Measured in terms of casualties, communal violence has been the severest of the three forms of violence analysed. Irrespective of the role of rumour and imagination in the appearance of communal violence, it is the only form in which the actual violence has direct spatial effects caused by the destruction, relocation or reconstruction of buildings, at least in the case of Kota Ambon. Eventually Kota Ambon was totally segregated along religious lines, the division made visible by the Jalur Gaza.

Since the fall of President Soeharto, when the spatial impact of violence was most strongly felt, violence has abated, but not disappeared. In Kota Ambon recollections

of glorifying achievements and past injustices keep the memory of communal violence alive (Schröder & Schmidt 2001: 10), and fights between Muslims and Christians still erupt occasionally. The incidence of lynching has not fallen to pre-1998 levels. Politicians continue to employ vigilantes or *preman* to intimidate either political opponents or citizens, and these vigilantes form, to borrow a phrase from Robert Cribb (cited in Colombijn 2005: 266), 'reservoirs of violence', which can be tapped when the situation seems to require violence.

In what way will the urban space again be reshaped after the violence has subsided? Violence is a much more urgent stimulus to implement spatial measures than amity, but there is another reason the spatial changes effected by a decline in the level of actual violence are slow. Places and landscapes are not only shaped by the ways in which violence is actually performed, but also how it is remembered (Schramm 2011).

Violence can cast especially long shadows on urban spaces when it has been traumatic. For instance, 'domicide', the intentional destruction of one's home by another human, which happened on a mass scale in Kota Ambon, is traumatic with demonstrable negative mental health effects (Akeesson 2014). Not only destruction of one's home is traumatic, but also, as one informant in Kota Ambon remarked to me, the forced evacuation, especially because it often took long before one could return. I believe that traumatic violence does not only influence spatial behaviour of victims, but also the behaviour of the audience in the triangle of violence. For instance, the terrorist attacks in Paris of 13 November 2015 have probably changed the use of public spaces by many *Parisiens*.

It is important that '[t]hrough the environmental revitalization of their neighbourhoods, [people] re-make a broken place, fight against grief, loss and violence, [and] address traumatic experiences' (Anguelovski 2013: 12). The shops and malls, which had been ransacked and destroyed in Jakarta in May 1998, have been rebuilt, but without addressing the traumas of the past. Abidin Kusno has argued that therefore the Chinese residents of Jakarta tend to have an ambiguous attitude to the new shops, which rebuilt in a completely new style, silence the horrendous memories of the rape victims, pretending that it is business as usual again (Purdey 2002; Kusno 2010: 101–124).

Of the cases of violence discussed in this article, only the participants in the communal violence in Kota Ambon have made a determined effort to follow reconciliation up with deliberate spatial interventions. Neighbourhoods dismantled barricades; mosques, churches, houses and other buildings were re-erected; the government relocated offices back to central places; and a live-in programme has stimulated people to cross the religious border. In cases in which violence has been most severe and hit both the state and middle-class people, the urban spatial consequences have been the biggest, but so are the efforts to undo these changes, precisely because the state and better-off want and can produce new urban spaces.

## Notes

1. The fourth kind of violence distinguished by Van Klinken, secessionist violence, typically takes place outside urban centres and will not be considered in this article.
2. Other scholars with a similar actor-oriented approach reserve a larger role for actors in Jakarta, see, for instance the work of Anne Loveband and Ken Young (2006).
3. In 2015 I had the chance to interview seven persons in Kota Ambon, contacted through mutual acquaintances. They were Muslims and Christians, men and women, but in one sense unrepresentative of the whole population because all had completed tertiary education. They were all very eager

to help me with information. Two of them are prominent men, regularly cited by name in other publications. These men gave routine answers, well aware of what they wanted to convey, one interlarding his Indonesian with English expressions and the other referring to academic literature. My five other interlocutors gave much more spontaneous answers to my questions.

4. This assured identification might actually have reduced violence, if Appadurai (1998) is correct that uncertainty about whether a person really is what he or she claims to be creates intolerable anxiety in individuals, making the body of the other the target of most terrifying violence.
5. The equation of houses with private space is not absolute. Azoulay (2013: 201) shows how the Israeli government distinguishes between homes which are protected and homes whose walls are 'exposed, penetrable, given to violation'.
6. The terms (*preman*, *jago*, *satgas*, *pamswakarsa* and in English thugs and vigilantes, or perhaps just criminal gangs) have slightly different meanings, which inevitably leads to imprecision in analyses.
7. Ironically, the Jakarta government also contracted vigilantes to curb the activities of *preman*. On the days these vigilantes patrolled the streets, of course no *preman* made their appearance: on that day the *preman* were in the forces hired to patrol the streets (Wilson 2006: 280).
8. An exception was the outburst of vigilante violence in May 1998, when 700 buildings were destroyed in Jakarta and some streets looked like a war zone (Tadié 2009: 141).

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